



The Relationship Between Communication Styles Within the Family and Social Maturity Among Secondary School Students

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Abstract

This study examines the relationship between communication styles within the family and social maturity among secondary school students. It highlights the crucial role of family communication in shaping adolescents' psychological development, social adjustment, and behavioral patterns. Family communication styles—whether democratic, authoritarian, or permissive—significantly influence how students develop social maturity, including responsibility, self-confidence, emotional regulation, and interpersonal skills. The research emphasizes that effective and positive communication within the family contributes to the development of well-adjusted and socially mature individuals, while negative or inconsistent communication may lead to social difficulties, emotional instability, and poor adaptation in school and society. By integrating perspectives from social psychology and family studies, this paper aims to analyze how communication patterns affect adolescents' social development and to identify the key factors that promote healthy social maturity in secondary school learners.

Keywords: Family communication; Social maturity; Adolescents; Secondary school students; Parenting styles; Social development; Emotional regulation; Social psychology; Family relationships; Communication patterns.

Introduction

The family is considered the primary and most influential social institution in the life of the individual. It is within the family environment that children first learn language, values, behaviors, and social norms that guide their interaction with others. As the first agent of socialization, the family plays a decisive role in shaping personality and determining the level of social adjustment and maturity of individuals, especially during adolescence.

Adolescence is a critical developmental stage characterized by rapid physical, psychological, and social changes. Secondary school students, who fall within this stage, experience increasing independence, emotional sensitivity, and a strong need for identity formation. During this period, family communication becomes even more important, as it serves as a foundation for emotional support, behavioral guidance, and social learning.

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Communication within the family refers to the exchange of information, emotions, and meanings between parents and children. It includes verbal and non-verbal interactions, patterns of dialogue, listening behavior, and the overall emotional climate of the household. The quality of this communication directly affects the adolescent's ability to understand social norms, manage emotions, and interact effectively with peers and society.

Family communication styles can generally be classified into different patterns, such as democratic (open and supportive), authoritarian (strict and controlling), and permissive (lenient and inconsistent). Each of these styles has a different impact on the development of adolescents' social maturity. Democratic communication tends to promote confidence, responsibility, and independence, while authoritarian communication may lead to fear, low self-esteem, or social withdrawal.

Social maturity refers to the individual's ability to behave appropriately in social situations, take responsibility for actions, regulate emotions, and build healthy relationships with others. It is a key indicator of successful social development and psychological adjustment. For secondary school students, social maturity is essential for academic success, peer relationships, and future integration into society.

From a social psychological perspective, the relationship between family communication and social maturity is deeply interconnected. Communication patterns within the family influence cognitive development, emotional regulation, and social learning processes. Adolescents who experience positive communication are more likely to develop empathy, cooperation, and problem-solving skills.

Conversely, poor communication within the family environment can negatively affect adolescent development. Lack of dialogue, excessive conflict, or emotional neglect may lead to behavioral problems, social anxiety, or difficulties in adapting to school and peer environments. These effects highlight the importance of the family as a key determinant of social behavior.

In addition, the increasing social and technological changes in modern society have transformed family communication patterns. The influence of digital media, reduced face-to-face interaction, and changing parental roles have introduced new challenges to maintaining effective communication within families. These changes can directly impact adolescents' emotional and social development.

Therefore, understanding the relationship between family communication styles and social maturity is essential for improving educational outcomes and promoting healthy psychological development among secondary school students. This study aims to explore how different communication patterns within the family contribute to or hinder the development of social maturity, and to emphasize the importance of strengthening positive communication for better social adjustment and well-being.

1. Family Communication Styles

Family communication styles represent the patterns through which parents and children interact, exchange information, and express emotions. These styles are fundamental in shaping

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the psychological and social development of adolescents, especially secondary school students who are in a critical stage of identity formation. The way families communicate influences how young individuals interpret social norms and respond to different life situations.

The democratic communication style is characterized by openness, dialogue, and mutual respect between parents and children. In this style, adolescents are encouraged to express their opinions freely while also respecting family rules and values. This type of communication fosters independence, confidence, and emotional stability, which are essential components of social maturity.

In contrast, the authoritarian communication style is based on strict rules, limited dialogue, and high parental control. Adolescents raised in such environments may experience obedience but often lack opportunities for self-expression. This can lead to reduced self-confidence, emotional suppression, and difficulties in developing social skills.

The permissive communication style is marked by excessive freedom and lack of consistent guidance. While it may allow adolescents to express themselves openly, it can also result in weak discipline and difficulty in understanding boundaries. As a result, social maturity may be negatively affected due to insufficient structure and guidance.

1.1. Emotional Support and Family Climate

Emotional support within the family plays a crucial role in shaping adolescents' psychological well-being. A supportive family environment characterized by love, care, and understanding helps students feel secure and valued, which enhances their ability to interact positively with others.

A positive family climate encourages trust and openness between parents and children. When adolescents feel emotionally supported, they are more likely to share their problems and seek guidance, which contributes to better emotional regulation and social adaptation.

On the other hand, a negative or conflict-ridden family environment can lead to emotional instability. Frequent conflicts, lack of communication, or emotional neglect may result in anxiety, aggression, or withdrawal from social interactions.

1.2. Social Maturity Dimensions

Social maturity refers to the level at which an individual can behave responsibly and effectively in social situations. It includes several dimensions such as responsibility, independence, emotional control, and the ability to cooperate with others.

Responsibility is a key component of social maturity, as it reflects the individual's ability to take accountability for actions and decisions. Adolescents who develop responsibility through family communication are more likely to succeed in school and social life.

Emotional regulation is another important dimension, allowing individuals to manage feelings such as anger, frustration, or sadness in appropriate ways. Family communication plays a major role in teaching adolescents how to control and express emotions effectively.

1.3. Parent–Adolescent Interaction

Parent–adolescent interaction refers to the quality and frequency of communication between parents and their children. Positive interaction is based on active listening, mutual respect, and open dialogue, which strengthens the emotional bond within the family.

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Effective communication allows parents to understand the needs and challenges faced by adolescents, especially during the secondary school stage. It also helps young individuals feel supported and guided in their academic and social lives.

However, poor interaction characterized by misunderstanding, lack of dialogue, or frequent conflict can weaken family relationships. This may negatively affect adolescents' social behavior and reduce their ability to adapt to school and peer environments.

1.4.Social and Psychological Outcomes

The quality of family communication has direct effects on adolescents' social and psychological development. Positive communication contributes to higher self-esteem, better academic performance, and stronger peer relationships.

Students who experience supportive communication within the family tend to develop better social skills and emotional stability. They are more capable of handling stress, resolving conflicts, and adapting to different social contexts.

In contrast, negative communication patterns may lead to behavioral problems, social withdrawal, and difficulties in school adjustment. These outcomes highlight the importance of healthy family communication in promoting social maturity among secondary school students.

2.Emotional Support and Family Climate

Emotional support and family climate represent one of the most influential factors in shaping adolescent development. The family is the primary emotional environment where individuals first experience feelings of love, care, and security. These emotional experiences form the foundation of personality and social behavior during later stages of life.

A positive family climate is characterized by warmth, understanding, and mutual respect between family members. In such environments, adolescents feel valued and accepted, which strengthens their psychological stability and enhances their ability to interact confidently with others in social settings.

Love within the family plays a fundamental role in emotional development. When parents express affection and care, adolescents develop a sense of belonging and self-worth. This emotional security contributes significantly to the formation of balanced and stable personalities.

Trust is another essential element of emotional support. When adolescents trust their parents and feel trusted in return, communication becomes more open and effective. This mutual trust encourages honest dialogue and reduces emotional distance within the family.

Understanding between parents and children is crucial for maintaining harmony in the family climate. When parents show empathy toward the challenges faced by adolescents, especially during secondary school years, it helps reduce stress and improves emotional adjustment.

Empathy allows family members to recognize and share each other's feelings. In an empathetic family environment, adolescents learn how to understand the emotions of others, which is an important skill for developing social relationships outside the family.

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A positive emotional climate promotes psychological security, which is essential for healthy adolescent development. When students feel emotionally safe at home, they are more likely to explore their social environment confidently and without fear.

In contrast, a negative emotional climate characterized by conflict, neglect, or emotional coldness can lead to psychological instability. Adolescents from such environments may experience anxiety, low self-esteem, or social withdrawal.

Emotional support within the family also influences academic performance. Students who receive encouragement and emotional backing from their families tend to perform better in school because they feel motivated and confident in their abilities.

Overall, emotional support and family climate are essential for building socially balanced individuals. A healthy emotional environment not only strengthens family relationships but also prepares adolescents for successful social integration and maturity.

3.Social Maturity Dimension

Social maturity refers to the level of psychological and behavioral development that enables an individual to function effectively in society. It reflects the ability to interact appropriately, take responsibility, and manage emotions in different social contexts.

Responsibility is one of the core dimensions of social maturity. It involves the ability to fulfill duties, respect rules, and accept the consequences of one's actions. Adolescents who develop responsibility are more likely to succeed in both academic and social life.

Independence is another important dimension of social maturity. It refers to the ability of individuals to make decisions and solve problems without excessive reliance on others. Family communication plays a key role in fostering independence during adolescence.

Emotional regulation is a crucial component of social maturity. It involves controlling emotions such as anger, frustration, and sadness in socially acceptable ways. Adolescents who lack emotional regulation may face difficulties in interpersonal relationships.

Social interaction skills are also part of social maturity. These include communication abilities, cooperation, empathy, and respect for others. Such skills are essential for building healthy relationships in school and society.

Adaptability is another dimension that reflects how well individuals adjust to new environments and situations. Secondary school students with high social maturity are better able to cope with academic pressure and social challenges.

Decision-making ability is closely linked to social maturity. It reflects the capacity to evaluate situations and choose appropriate actions. Adolescents develop this skill gradually through guidance and experience within the family environment.

Self-confidence is a key factor that supports all aspects of social maturity. Confident individuals are more likely to engage in social activities, express themselves clearly, and handle social pressure effectively.

Social maturity also includes moral development, which involves understanding right and wrong behavior. Family values and communication strongly influence how adolescents develop ethical awareness and responsible behavior.

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Overall, social maturity is a multidimensional construct that reflects the psychological and social readiness of adolescents to function in society. It is strongly influenced by family communication, emotional support, and social experiences, making it a key outcome of healthy development.

4. Parent–Adolescent Interaction

Parent–adolescent interaction represents a fundamental component in the development of adolescents' personality and social behavior. It refers to the daily communication processes, emotional exchanges, and relational dynamics between parents and their children during the secondary school stage. This interaction plays a decisive role in shaping emotional stability and social maturity.

Effective communication between parents and adolescents is based on active listening. When parents listen attentively to their children, adolescents feel valued and understood. This encourages them to express their thoughts and emotions freely, which strengthens trust within the family environment.

Openness in dialogue is another essential aspect of parent–adolescent interaction. Open communication allows adolescents to discuss their problems, academic challenges, and personal concerns without fear of judgment. This openness fosters emotional closeness and improves mutual understanding between family members.

Mutual understanding is a key factor that enhances the quality of family relationships. When parents understand the developmental needs and psychological changes of adolescents, they are better able to respond appropriately. This reduces conflicts and promotes harmony within the household.

Conflict management is an inevitable part of parent–adolescent relationships. Differences in opinions, expectations, and behaviors may lead to disagreements. However, constructive conflict resolution strategies, such as dialogue and negotiation, help maintain positive relationships and prevent emotional distancing.

A lack of effective communication can lead to misunderstandings between parents and adolescents. When communication is weak or inconsistent, adolescents may feel neglected or misunderstood, which can negatively affect their emotional well-being and social behavior.

Positive parent–adolescent interaction contributes significantly to the development of self-confidence. Adolescents who receive support and encouragement from their parents are more likely to develop a strong sense of identity and social competence.

In contrast, poor interaction characterized by authoritarian communication or emotional distance may lead to behavioral problems. Adolescents may become rebellious, withdrawn, or socially insecure due to lack of emotional support and guidance.

Parent–adolescent interaction also influences academic motivation. Students who maintain positive relationships with their parents tend to show higher levels of motivation, discipline, and commitment to school responsibilities.

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Overall, strong and healthy parent–adolescent interaction is essential for building social maturity and psychological stability. It provides adolescents with the emotional foundation needed to navigate social challenges and develop balanced personalities.

5.Social and Psychological Outcomes

Social and psychological outcomes refer to the effects that family communication styles and interaction patterns have on adolescents' behavior, emotional development, and social adaptation. These outcomes reflect the overall impact of the family environment on secondary school students' personality development.

One of the most significant social outcomes is the development of interpersonal skills. Adolescents who experience positive communication within the family tend to interact more effectively with peers, teachers, and members of society. They develop better cooperation and communication abilities.

Self-esteem is another important psychological outcome influenced by family communication. Supportive and encouraging family environments help adolescents develop a positive self-image, which enhances confidence and reduces feelings of insecurity in social situations.

Academic performance is also closely linked to social and psychological outcomes. Students who benefit from strong family communication and emotional support are more motivated and focused, leading to improved school achievement and engagement.

Emotional stability is a key psychological outcome that results from healthy family communication. Adolescents who experience understanding and support are better able to regulate their emotions and cope with stress, anxiety, and pressure.

Conversely, negative communication patterns within the family can lead to behavioral problems. Adolescents may exhibit aggression, withdrawal, or defiance when they lack emotional support or experience constant conflict at home.

Social adjustment is another important outcome. Adolescents with positive family relationships adapt more easily to school environments and peer groups, while those with poor communication may struggle with integration and acceptance.

Family communication also influences decision-making behavior. Adolescents who receive guidance and open dialogue at home are more likely to make responsible and thoughtful decisions in their personal and academic lives.

Long-term psychological outcomes include personality development and future social functioning. Early family experiences shape how individuals interact in adulthood, influencing their professional relationships and social behavior.

Overall, social and psychological outcomes demonstrate the strong connection between family communication and adolescent development. Positive communication fosters well-adjusted, confident, and socially mature individuals, while negative communication may hinder healthy psychological and social growth.

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Conclusion

This study has examined the relationship between family communication styles and social maturity among secondary school students, highlighting the family as the primary environment for socialization and psychological development. The findings emphasize that communication within the family is not a simple exchange of information, but a complex process that shapes adolescents' emotional stability, social behavior, and personality development. In this context, the family emerges as a central institution in building socially mature individuals capable of adapting effectively to school and wider society.

The analysis shows that positive communication styles, particularly democratic and supportive interactions, play a crucial role in fostering social maturity. When adolescents experience open dialogue, emotional support, trust, and mutual understanding within the family, they are more likely to develop confidence, responsibility, emotional regulation, and strong interpersonal skills. These qualities are essential indicators of social maturity and contribute significantly to academic success and healthy social integration.

Conversely, authoritarian or inconsistent communication patterns may negatively affect adolescents' development. Strict control, lack of dialogue, emotional neglect, or excessive permissiveness can lead to social withdrawal, low self-esteem, behavioral problems, and difficulties in emotional regulation. These negative outcomes demonstrate that the quality of family communication directly influences both psychological well-being and social adaptation during the critical stage of adolescence.

The study also highlights that parent-adolescent interaction is a key mediator between family communication and social maturity. Effective interaction based on active listening, openness, and constructive conflict resolution strengthens emotional bonds and reduces misunderstanding between parents and children. In contrast, weak communication and unresolved conflicts may create emotional distance and increase the risk of social maladjustment.

Furthermore, the findings confirm that social maturity is a multidimensional construct that includes responsibility, independence, emotional control, social skills, adaptability, and moral awareness. These dimensions are not developed in isolation but are strongly influenced by daily family experiences. Therefore, the family acts as a foundational system through which adolescents learn how to behave, think, and interact in socially acceptable ways.

In addition, the study underscores the importance of emotional climate within the family. A supportive environment characterized by love, empathy, and trust contributes to psychological security, which is essential for the development of balanced and mature personalities. On the other hand, negative emotional climates can significantly hinder social and emotional development, leading to long-term adjustment difficulties.

It is also evident that modern social changes, including digital communication and evolving family structures, have introduced new challenges to traditional family interaction patterns. These changes may weaken direct communication within families, making it even more necessary to reinforce positive communication strategies and strengthen parental roles in guiding adolescents.

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6.Recommendations

Based on the results of this study, several recommendations can be proposed to enhance family communication and promote social maturity among secondary school students:

First, parents should be encouraged to adopt democratic communication styles that promote dialogue, mutual respect, and emotional openness. Such communication helps adolescents feel valued and understood, which strengthens their social confidence and maturity.

Second, family awareness programs should be developed to educate parents about the importance of positive communication and its impact on adolescent development. These programs can be implemented through schools, community centers, and social institutions.

Third, strengthening emotional support within the family is essential. Parents should provide encouragement, empathy, and understanding, especially during adolescence, when students face academic and social pressures.

Fourth, schools should play an active role in supporting family communication by organizing parent-teacher meetings and counseling sessions. This cooperation helps bridge the gap between home and school environments.

Fifth, training programs for parents on conflict management and effective communication skills should be promoted. These programs can help reduce misunderstandings and improve family relationships.

Sixth, adolescents should also be encouraged to express their feelings and opinions in a respectful and constructive manner. Developing communication skills at both sides of the relationship strengthens mutual understanding.

Finally, further research should be conducted on the impact of digital communication and social media on family interaction and adolescent social maturity, as these factors are becoming increasingly influential in modern society.

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